

CPC Minutes of May 21, 2013

A regular meeting of the City Plan Commission (CPC) was held on Tuesday, May 21, 2013 at 4:45 p.m. in the Department of the Planning and Development (DPD) 1st Floor Meeting Room, 444 Westminster Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Opening Session

Call to order: Chairwoman West called the meeting to order at 4:47 p.m.

Members Present: Chairwoman Christine West, Harrison Bilodeau, Ina Anderson, JoAnn Ryan, Meredyth Church, Victor Capellan

Members absent: Ina Anderson

Staff Present: Robert Azar and Matthew Jerzyk, City Solicitor

Approval of meeting minutes from April 23, 2013: Ms. West suggested that the details in the minutes regarding case 13-006MA be more specific about compliance with Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) regulations and that the applicant not ask for any variances from those requirements. Mr. Azar said that would be reflected in the meeting transcript. A discussion on amendment of the minutes ensued. Ms. Ryan made a motion seconded by Mr. Bilodeau to approve the minutes with the proposed amendment. All voted in favor.

Mr. Capellan arrived at 4:50 pm

Director's report: Mr. Azar said the Thayer Street planning study was progressing and the DPD was working with stakeholders. He said the DPD was working with the firm Camiros and public relations firm Addventures on rewriting the zoning ordinance. He said Camiros would continue to work with different groups and stakeholders in the near future.

Mr. Azar spoke about agenda item no. 3. He said the applicant was requesting a continuance for the project which requires dimensional adjustments from the CPC as well as relief for parking and density from the zoning board of review. He said the DPD anticipated similar requests in the future and said that the CPC should consider the implications of higher density and the quality of project execution when reviewing development requests.

Ms. West asked if the CPC should have discussions about topics as part of a regular meeting. Mr. Azar said it would be helpful to discuss different zoning issues as changes were made. Mr. Bilodeau said he was interested in discussing how incremental changes in use affected buildings. Ms. West said she was interested in exploring different ways to measure density. A discussion on density ensued.

2. Referral 3364 – Petition to abandon a portion of Beach Ave.

Petition to abandon the portion of Beach Ave along the eastern edge of the property at AP 17 Lot 416 – for action (Fox Point)

Agenda item 2 was heard out of order at the applicant's request. Mr. John Garrahy requested that the item be continued. Mr. Bilodeau made a motion seconded by Ms. Church to continue the item. All voted in favor.

MINOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

3. Case No. 13-014 MI – 207 Waterman Street (Preliminary Plan Stage)

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing building to construct a four story (50 feet), 30 unit multifamily development on a lot measuring approximately 11,677 SF. The applicant is proposing to provide 23 internal parking spaces, 45 are required. The development will require dimensional relief from height, parking and density requirements – for action (AP 14 Lot 516, Wayland)

Item number 3 was heard out of order. Mr. Azar said the applicant had requested a continuance through email. He said the review period was considered stopped due to the request. He said a number of required items were not submitted and issues with the building code were discovered by the technical review committee. He said the

applicant would rectify the issues and submit revised plans. Ms. Ryan made a motion seconded by Mr. Capellan to continue the item. All voted in favor except Mr. Bilodeau who recused himself and did not vote.

CITY COUNCIL REFERRAL

1. Referral 3363 – An ordinance in amendment of the Downtown Providence Renewal Official Redevelopment Plan

Review of the amendment, which proposes acquisition and redevelopment of the building at 94 Washington Street, for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan – for action (AP 25 Lot 354, Downtown)

Mr. Azar introduced the amendment. He said the renewal plan was responsible for many projects Downtown. The Providence Redevelopment Agency (PRA) plan would be amended to acquire the building at 94 Washington Street, which was damaged in a fire and met the definition of blight. He said the CPC was required to make findings on conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The redevelopment agency would find an owner that would rehabilitate and use the building. A discussion on the building ensued.

Ms. West said she was concerned about the building being demolished after acquisition. Mr. Azar said the CPC could propose changes to the text of the ordinance or the redevelopment plan. He said the building was under the purview of the Downtown Design Review Committee (DRC), which has strict regulations about building facades along A streets. Ms. West said she wanted language to prohibit a surface parking lot. Mr. Azar said that was possible.

Ms. West asked if a provision for reversion of ownership could be included if a developer could not redevelop the building. Mr. Azar said the redevelopment plan had provisions for taking back ownership of a property if a developer did not meet certain benchmarks. He said the CPC could find the plan to be in conformance with the comprehensive plan subject to that condition. A discussion on the building's redevelopment ensued.

Mr. Grant Dulgarian asked if the City could bring the building into compliance with building code before selling it. Mr. Azar said it was the building department's opinion that the building was structurally sound but the PRA could be required to make improvements if the building was not sold within a certain amount of time. Ms. West said that the board's findings should reflect the building's historic value and its contribution to the Downtown fabric. She said the CPC should also reference the DRC's regulations for permissible uses Downtown use and mention that the zoning ordinance prohibits parking lots downtown. Mr. Jerzyk said that the intent of the acquisition was to redevelop and secure the building.

Mr. Azar said the CPC would be finding the redevelopment plan amendment consistent with the comprehensive plan subject to language being added to the amendment that the D-1 zoning promotes historic preservation, regulates demolition and prohibits principal use parking lots. In finding consistency with the comprehensive plan, it should be stressed that the PRA does whatever is necessary to ensure that the building is secured, preserved and rehabilitated.

Ms. Ryan made a motion using the language suggested by Mr. Azar to find the amendment consistent with the comprehensive plan, seconded by Ms. Church. All voted in favor.

Adjournment

Mr. Bilodeau made a motion seconded by Ms. Church to adjourn the meeting. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 5:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Choyon Manjrekar,
Recording Secretary